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upon the "Nurse Training Schools" of the country. The last report was published in 1906 and the next one was due in 1909. The head of the Bureau told me that this later one (then being compiled) would not contain the usual chapter on nurse training schools for the reason that the Bureau had experienced such difficulty in time past in obtaining the necessary information from hospitals and schools that it had decided to omit statistics of this nature from future reports.

This appears to me to be particularly unfortunate, occurring as it does at the very time when we are so earnestly striving to place the training of nurses upon a purely educational basis, and it is for this reason that I am bringing it to the attention of the profession.

Very respectfully,

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Superintendent Nurse Corps, United States Navy.

#### DIFFERENCE IN NURSING METHODS IN DIFFERENT LOCALITIES

DEAR EDITOR: As nursing is now considered a science and is taught universally, one would think its practice would be similar in different localities, but this is not so. While the object is in all places the same, the methods of obtaining the end vary greatly.

To one who has been accustomed to the effective system of the large New England hospitals, those of the west present a striking contrast. This might be explained by the fact that our eastern institutions are better established, while those of the west have attained their prominence within the last few years and through physicians who have gained their position in the medical profession by their characteristic ambition and ability.

Generally speaking, the hospitals of the west have exceptionally fine buildings, with good location, sanitation, etc. Money seems not to have been an object in fitting operating rooms, sterilizing appliances, and the many other departments without which the modern hospital is considered incomplete. This apparent extravagance often seems appalling. The nature of the work done is quite similar and the results equally good; but this is accomplished with much less labor and confusion in the east.

As a rule, the physicians of the west are more progressive and scientific, which is to be admired, yet extremes are never good. For instance: preparations discussed or read of one day are put in practice the following. This, of course, does not tend to a very smooth system in an operating room where assistants and nurses are at the disadvantage of not knowing just what may be required on this special occasion. Their progress seems too rapid to develop that system so necessary to any hospital.

Work which in many places is performed by two or three nurses, would in a case like the above require six or eight, while an operating room appears to be the nucleus of all the unemployed in the hospital. The fact that the more assistants and nurses who come in contact with the operation increase the liability of infection seems not to have been taken into consideration. Much help is also required to prepare different instruments and appliances, the necessity of which was not apparent at the offstart.

In fact, the hustle and bustle, so characteristic of the west, appear to have penetrated even the hospitals, the prevalent idea being that no patient can be

properly cared for without the services of a special nurse, no matter how trivial the operation, which, of course, is financially beneficial to the hospital, and especially so where there is a large training school which is the case with the average hospital.

It might also be mentioned that the nurses in general do not seem so well disciplined or orderly in the execution of their work. Their intentions, however, are the best and they are most self-sacrificing, which, with their sympathy, usually counter-balances all other deficiencies, both in the estimation of the doctors and of the patients.

In one of the large western hospitals not long since, the nurses of the training school took exception to the head nurse for some cause, either real or imaginary, and demanded that she be removed from the hospital. Interesting to relate, their judgment was accepted, in view of the fact that all the nurses would resign from the training school. In a very short time her successor met a similar fate. How it was finally settled is not known, but all the training schools of that city suffered.

For nurses who are good organizers and strict disciplinarians the west offers a broad field of labor, but those who enter this field with the idea of possessing superior knowledge will be quite disillusioned. It is a peculiar fact that the management and doctors of these hospitals realize the absence of some important factor, but rarely know what it is. Nurses from the east who take up the work find it rather difficult at first, for even though they receive the assurance of support from all concerned, the position is a delicate one. It were well not to be too ambitious or over-zealous in our endeavors, at first, for time and tact, which dispel all difficulties, and concentration of purpose, will, in the natural course of events, be rewarded.

EXPERIENCED.

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Medical science has spent many years and much labor in the vain effort to discover a parasite of cancer. Even recently it has been feared that cancer patients were a menace to their neighbors, and that the houses of cancer victims should be burned. But the experimental study of tumors has greatly strengthened the view that cancer is not a contagious disease, that its exciting cause cannot be a readily transmissible parasite, and that the long-looked-for cancer parasite is the cancer cell. The field of research has, therefore, been narrowly defined, and it is not likely that the enthusiastic search for a specific cancer parasite will soon again assume the dominant position it once occupied.—JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.